

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method for collating e-mail comprising:
 - 2 (a) differencing at least one first e-mail message and a second e-mail
3 message wherein said at least one first e-mail message is prior to said second e-mail
4 message, said differencing generating a set of unmatched text and a set of matched
5 text;
 - 6 (b) matching said set of matched text against a collated message file, said
7 matching step identifying a position in said collated message file at an end of a
8 portion of said collated message file corresponding to said set of matched text; and
 - 9 (c) inserting said set of unmatched text in said collated message file at
10 said position.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one first e-mail message
2 comprises a plurality of first e-mail messages, the method further comprising:
 - 3 (d) repeating step (a) for each e-mail message of said plurality of first e-
4 mail messages; and
 - 5 (e) selecting one of said plurality of e-mail messages having a largest set
6 of matched text, and wherein, in step (b), said largest set of matched lines is matched
7 against said collated message file.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2 further comprising selectably adding a user-
2 configurable identifier to said set of unmatched text inserted in step (c).
- 1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one first e-mail message
2 and said second e-mail message comprise a set of topically-related e-mail selected in
3 response to a preselected pattern in a header portion of each e-mail of said set of
4 topically-related e-mail.
- 1 5. The method of claim 4 further comprising:
 - 2 (d) searching each e-mail message of said set of topically-related e-mail
3 for at least one member of a preselected set of prepended identifiers;

4 (e) if said at least one at least one member of a preselected set of
5 prepended identifiers matches a portion of said message of said set of topically-
6 related messages:

7 (i) selecting a portion of said message not having said prepended
8 identifier;

9 (ii) inserting said portion from substep (i) into said collated
10 message file at a position following a portion matching a set of text having said at
11 least one member of a preselected set of prepended identifiers; and

12 (iii) bypassing steps (a)-(c).

1 6. The method of claim 5 further comprising:

2 (f) extracting said set of text having said at least one member of a
3 preselected set of prepended identifiers;

4 (g) stripping said at least one member of a preselected set of prepended
5 identifiers from said set of text; and

6 (h) matching a set of text from step (g) against said collated message file,
7 wherein said position in substep (e)(ii) comprises a position at an end of a portion of
8 said collated message file matching a set of text from step (g).

1 7. The method of claim 5 wherein said step of searching each e-mail
2 message of said set of topically-related e-mail comprises searching each e-mail in
3 chronological order of said set of topically-related e-mail.

1 8. A computer program product in a tangible storage medium, the
2 program product for collating e-mail comprising programming instructions for:

3 (a) differencing at least one first e-mail message and a second e-mail
4 message wherein said at least one first e-mail message is prior to said second e-mail
5 message, said differencing generating a set of unmatched text and a set of matched
6 text;

7 (b) matching said set of matched text against a collated message file, said
8 matching step identifying a position in said collated message file at an end of a
9 portion of said collated message file corresponding to said set of matched text; and

10 (c) inserting said set of unmatched text in said collated message file at
11 said position.

1 9. The program product of claim 8 wherein said at least one first e-mail
2 message comprises a plurality of first e-mail messages, the program product further
3 comprising programming instructions for:

4 (d) repeating (a) for each e-mail message of said plurality of first e-mail
5 messages; and

6 (e) selecting one of said plurality of e-mail messages having a largest set
7 of matched text, and wherein, in (b), said largest set of matched lines is matched
8 against said collated message file.

1 10. The program product of claim 8 further comprising programming
2 instructions for selectably adding a user-configurable identifier to said set of
3 unmatched text inserted in (c).

1 11. The program product of claim 8 wherein said at least one first e-mail
2 message and said second e-mail message comprise a set of topically-related e-mail
3 selected in response to a preselected pattern in a header portion of each e-mail of said
4 set of topically-related e-mail.

1 12. The program product of claim 11 further comprising programming
2 instructions for:

3 (d) searching each e-mail message of said set of topically-related e-mail
4 for at least one member of a preselected set of prepended identifiers;

5 (e) if said at least one at least one member of a preselected set of
6 prepended identifiers matches a portion of said message of said set of topically-
7 related messages:

8 (i) selecting a portion of said message not having said prepended
9 identifier;

10 (ii) inserting said portion from (i) into said collated message file at
11 a position following a portion matching a set of text having said at least one member
12 of a preselected set of prepended identifiers; and

13 (iii) bypassing (a)-(c).

1 13. The program product of claim 5 further comprising programming
2 instructions for:

3 (f) extracting said set of text having said at least one member of a
4 preselected set of prepended identifiers;

5 (g) stripping said at least one member of a preselected set of prepended
6 identifiers from said set of text; and

7 (h) matching a set of text from (g) against said collated message file,
8 wherein said position in (e)(ii) comprises a position at an end of a portion of said
9 collated message file matching a set of text from (g).

1 14. The program product of claim 12 wherein said programming
2 instructions for searching each e-mail message of said set of topically-related e-mail
3 comprises programming instructions for searching each e-mail in chronological order
4 of said set of topically-related e-mail.

1 15. A data processing system for collating e-mail comprising:

2 (a) circuitry operable for differencing at least one first e-mail message and
3 a second e-mail message wherein said at least one first e-mail message is prior to said
4 second e-mail message, said differencing generating a set of unmatched text and a set
5 of matched text;

6 (b) circuitry operable for matching said set of matched text against a
7 collated message file, said matching step identifying a position in said collated
8 message file at an end of a portion of said collated message file corresponding to said
9 set of matched text; and

10 (c) circuitry operable for inserting said set of unmatched text in said
11 collated message file at said position.

1 16. The data processing system of claim 15 wherein said at least one first
2 e-mail message comprises a plurality of first e-mail messages, the data processing
3 system further comprising:

4 (d) circuitry operable for repeating (a) for each e-mail message of said
5 plurality of first e-mail messages; and

6 (e) circuitry operable for selecting one of said plurality of e-mail messages
7 having a largest set of matched text, and wherein, in (b), said largest set of matched
8 lines is matched against said collated message file.

1 17. The data processing system of claim 15 further comprising circuitry
2 operable for selectably adding a user-configurable identifier to said set of unmatched
3 text inserted in (c).

1 18. The data processing system of claim 15 wherein said at least one first
2 e-mail message and said second e-mail message comprise a set of topically-related e-
3 mail selected in response to a preselected pattern in a header portion of each e-mail of
4 said set of topically-related e-mail.

1 19. The data processing system of claim 18 further comprising:

2 (d) circuitry operable for searching each e-mail message of said set of
3 topically-related e-mail for at least one member of a preselected set of prepended
4 identifiers;

5 (e) circuitry operable for, if said at least one at least one member of a
6 preselected set of prepended identifiers matches a portion of said message of said set
7 of topically-related messages:

8 (i) selecting a portion of said message not having said prepended
9 identifier;

10 (ii) inserting said portion from (i) into said collated message file at
11 a position following a portion matching a set of text having said at least one member
12 of a preselected set of prepended identifiers; and

13 (iii) bypassing (a)-(c).

1 20. The data processing system of claim 19 further comprising:

2 (f) circuitry operable for extracting said set of text having said at least one
3 member of a preselected set of prepended identifiers;

4 (g) circuitry operable for stripping said at least one member of a
5 preselected set of prepended identifiers from said set of text; and

6 (h) circuitry operable for matching a set of text from (g) against said
7 collated message file, wherein said position in (e)(ii) comprises a position at an end of
8 a portion of said collated message file matching a set of text from (g).